

~Japan's Best Hot Spring Town, Kinosaki Onsen~

## Find Tradition and Culture Outside of the Onsen



In Kinosaki Onsen, traditional Japanese culture can be found around every corner, including in the town's long withstanding straw craft. This straw craft, known as *mugiwara zaiku* in Japanese, is regarded as a unique traditional handicraft with its vibrant colors and intricate patterns. It is said that in mid-Edo era (around 1720 AD), a craftsman named Hanhichi from the Inshuu area (what is now Tottori Prefecture) came to stay in Kinosaki Onsen. To make money to pay for his lodging expenses, Hanhichi sold bamboo flutes and spinning tops decorated with colored straw.

After this, the straw craft was also used to decorate chests, boxes, and wooden prayer plaques. After the Meiji period began, famous artists visited Kinosaki and drew sketches for the straw craft's designs, and thus straw craft gained popularity as an expensive, popular, and unparalleled handicraft. Today, the straw is flattened, dyed, and placed on paulownia boxes, colored paper, spinning tops, and clay bells. Kinosaki Onsen is proud to be the only place in Japan which continues the traditional production of straw craft while preserving the original skills and techniques of the past.

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Visitors to Kinosaki Onsen can book the [Straw Craft Activity and Craftsman Workshop Tour \(with English guide\)](#) to observe the fascinating and complex straw craft process, learn about its history, and



get a private tour of the craftsman's workshop at the Kamiya Mingei Straw Craft Shop. Guests make their own original straw craft design on a small box to keep as a lovely souvenir. With the help of the craftsman and an English-speaking guide, participants will get to trim, position, and glue delicate pieces of straw into a beautifully intricate patterned design.



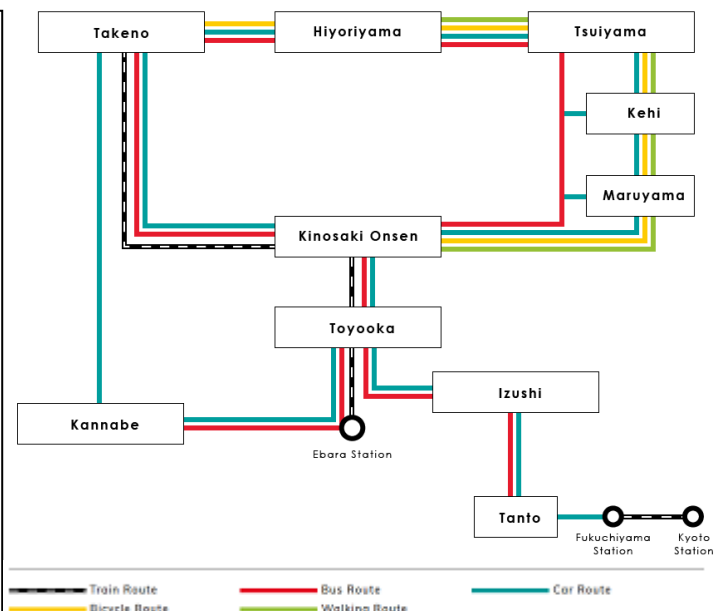
For a shorter, cheaper option, visitors to Kinosaki Onsen can try decorating small fans, keychains, and postcards at the [Kinosaki Straw Craft Museum](#). They have a handy workshop guide written in English, so you can understand every step of the process and get the most out of the experience!

The Kinosaki Straw Craft Museum houses many traditional straw craft works dating back to the mid-1700s, so visitors can see various traditional designs and patterns. There is also a video one can watch inside the museum, which shows the history and process of making this craft, all with English subtitles. Create something that is unique to the area.



**Ideal visit plan: 2-3 days in Kinosaki Onsen and its surrounding areas**

- Day 1: Leave Kyoto/Osaka by train to Kinosaki Onsen, explore the town
- Day 2: Join the Straw Craft Activity and Craftsman Workshop Tour  
Head to Izushi Castle Town for lunch and to enjoy attractions and a townscape nostalgic of the Edo era
- Day 3: Have breakfast in your ryokan and then check out of Kinosaki Onsen  
Return to Kyoto/Osaka





[Kinosaki Onsen](#) is a town of time-honored hot springs dating back 1300 years ago. It is home to seven public bathhouses, all located within walking distance of each other and the train station. Guests are encouraged to wear yukata and geta, stroll through the town, and go onsen-hopping.

[Toyooka](#) is a downtown area home to the Oriental White Stork, a bird that was revived from extinction in this very town. The city's efforts restored the Oriental White Stork population, and now about 140 fly the skies of Japan. Toyooka is also known for the Genbudo Caves.



[Izushi](#) is the resident castle town, popular for its nostalgic atmosphere of Edo-era Japan. It is home to many interesting attractions such as castle ruins, a samurai house, a kabuki theater, and a clock tower. The town's specialty is Izushi Sara Soba, buckwheat noodles served in small portions on small plates.

[Kannabe](#) is a mountainous area with fun activities year-round. In the winter, one can go skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, and sledding. In the warm months, one can go camping, paragliding, fishing, tree climbing, and more. Kannabe is the perfect destination for adventurers.



[Takeno](#) is a quaint fisherman town that is a hidden gem among the northern coast of Hyogo Prefecture. The beach has clear, blue waters while the mountains surrounding it offer great hiking opportunities. It is encouraged to stroll through the peaceful town, where one can find small shops and traditional landscapes.

[Tanto](#) is a quiet countryside town with magnificent nature—including a giant field of tulips in the spring and brilliant red-leaved trees in the fall.

